4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

A Coorg woman is rarely idle, her busy hands find always some work to do, and no wonder, if we consider the life and bustle of a Coorg house with its 40, 60, or 80 and more inmates. Two or three generations, grandfather and grandmother, their sons and daughters-in-law and the children of these families all live and mess together. The labourers also belong to the household and look up to the mistress for food and orders. The fattening of the pigs, the milking of the cows, the water supply for the house, these and many other cares are under the immediate supervision of the mistress. Where peace and harmony exist, a Coorg house presents a patriarchal life indeed, but the idyllic picture is too often marred by discord occasioned by the harsh régime of an imperious mother-in-law, by the jealousy and heartburnings of married brothers, or the more material questions of family income and individual claims. The master or yejamána, who is always the senior male member of the house, has no easy position, especially in our days, when a tendency to break up these large houses clearly manifests itself. But Coorg women of a commanding spirit and superior character are often heard of who, like Abigail of old, with tact and wisdom subdue the unruly elements of this bustling human beehive and make the residents subservient to the common weal and honour of the family. Here is a story to the purpose:—"Six generations ago, there was a woman called Doddi Auwa[1]—the great lady—who lived at Almanda house, in the village of Arméri, which belongs to Beppunádu. She was the mistress of the Almanda property, being the only child of rich parents. She was a woman of extraordinary size and strength of body. Nor was she less distinguished by qualities of mind and character. Throughout the country she was known as the wisest, the richest, the strongest of Coorg women. Independent owner of a Coorg estate, she was at liberty to choose a husband for herself. Her choice fell upon a man of the same clan. Utta-

[1] [Errata: This should read "Dodda-Auva." See Corrigenda, Cat. 116, P. 493 -- Analyst]

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592 562 173 cha, a son of the Mánanda house. He was a good sort of a husband, but much inferior every way to his great wife. Perhaps she had chosen him for this very reason. His place in the house was rather that of head-servant, than of husband and master. Every year the people of Arméri used to send a caravan to Irkúr, in the low country, near Cannanore, to fetch salt. At other times caravans, carrying rice to the coast, would start from Arméri during the dry season. On such occasions Doddi Auwa$^{2}_{A}$ would herself attend to every thing, put the cattle in readiness, prepare provisions, and at last accompay her husband and his oxen to the place of meeting, appointed for the whole train from the village. On parting, she would recommend her husband and his beasts to the kind offices of the best men in the caravan, and return home to her great house and her large business. Often, when husband or servants appeared too slow in loading the oxen, she would bid them step aside and taking the double sacks quietly with both hands, lay them softly and evenly upon the backs of the cattle. She was famed equally for wisdom and honesty.

Also Mudduráya who ruled Coorg in her time, respected and reverenced her, and often, on coming to Beppunádu, he stopped to have a talk with Doddi Auwa$^{2}_{A}$ of Almanda house. In the course of time Doddi Auwa$^{3}_{A}$ became mother of four daughters, but to her great grief no son was granted her, to succeed to the Almanda property. When the daughters came of age, she gave them in marriage to sons of neighbouring landholders. The eldest became the wife of a member of the Pálekanda family, the second married into the Púlanda house, the third was given to the Amnichanda family. The youngest, by a general agreement of the chiefs, was also given to the Pálekanda house, but, as heiress of the Almanda property, she had to give her sons, if she bore any, to her mother. This daughter, the youngest, bore 4 sons in succession. Of these, the two eldest were brought up by their grand-mother Doddi

$^{1}_{A}$ $^{2}_{A}$ $^{3}_{A}$ [Errata: This should read "Doddi-Auva". See Corrigenda, Cat. 116, P. 493 -- Analyst]

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Auwa[1] at Almanda. The name of one was Timmaya, that of the other Máchu. Máchu had a son Ayappa whose son was Bollu, the father of Stephanas, the first Coorg Christian." 592 562 173

The culinary art of the Coorg women is not much appreciated by a European palate, which relishes less hot condiments and a more sparing use of oil and ghee. Meat, whether game, pork, mutton, fowl or fish is cut into small pieces irrespective of joints and made into a nourishing savoury curry, which, with a dish of boiled rice, seasoned with mango, lime, citron and Ambatti-pickle, makes to native taste an excellent meal. The Coorg women excel in preparing a great variety of pickle and chutney, also sweet preserves and sweetmeats. Their appams or nfradóshe are relished even by Europeans. The kitchens of the Coorgs, which are inside the house, are remarkable for the cleanliness of the cooking-vessels in use. 252 262 [356]

The Coorgs generally take an early meal at 7 of rice-conjee seasoned with pickle or curds. At 10 they partake of a more substantial breakfast, consisting of boiled rice and curry. At 3 o'clock again conjee is taken as in the morning, and in the evening a hearty supper of boiled rice with vegetable or meat-curry and other condiments. Toddy of the Baine-mara (Caryota urens), also a kind of beer made of fermented rice, rice-brandy and arrack are the usual beverages, but lately the strongest European liquors have become only too familiar to the Coorgs at all hours of the day. 264 262 273 [177]

As is the custom with other Hindus, the Coorg women attend upon their lords and the male members of the house, before they sit down to their own separate meal. This selfish and unmanly custom greatly detracts from the charm of family life. The meals spread on brass plates, on low stools, are rather animal feeds than family gatherings round the social table. [562] [415] [352]

The Coorgs are very hospitable; no beggar goes away empty from their houses. A visit from Europeans is looked 574

[1] [Errata: this should read "Dodda-Auva" see corrigenda, Cat. 116, p. 493 -- Analyst]